United Nations A/56/334

General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 September 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Item 131 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Human rights and mass exoduses

Report of the Secretary-General**

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* A/56/150.
** The footnote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

01-53245 (E) 051001

Summary

At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 54/180 of 17 December 1999, entitled "Human rights and mass exoduses", in which, deeply disturbed by the scale and magnitude of exoduses and displacements of people in many regions of the world, the Assembly stressed the need for a comprehensive approach by the international community to address the root causes and effects of movements of refugees and other displaced persons. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare and submit to it at its fifty-sixth session a report on the implementation of the resolution as it pertains to all aspects of human rights and mass exoduses. The present report is submitted in response to that request.

The report makes reference to a growing awareness among the international community of the link between racism and ethnic conflicts as a root cause of forcible flows of population, as well as the causes of these tensions. It also provides information about relevant preparatory activities for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to be held in Durban, South Africa, in early September of 2001.

The report provides also a brief description of actions by the international community to enhance its response to the forcible movement of refugees and displaced persons, including efforts undertaken for the wide dissemination, use and application of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement developed by the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons.

It refers to some efforts undertaken by the United Nations and other institutions to enhance the Organization's preventive capacities, as well as to steps towards better and more effective coordination to improve its emergency response to situations of mass exoduses and internal displacement. It recognizes however, that progress still remains to be made in this respect and emphasizes that human rights and humanitarian components of the United Nations must continue to cooperate in order to ensure that human rights violations as cause and consequence of mass exoduses are addressed and the protection of refugees and displaced persons enhanced.

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 54/180 of 17 December 1999, entitled "Human rights and mass exoduses", in which the Assembly, inter alia, acknowledged that mass exoduses of populations are caused by multiple and complex factors, such as human rights violations, persecution, political and ethnic conflicts, famine and economic insecurity, poverty and generalized violence. The Assembly strongly deplored ethnic and other forms of intolerance, and called upon all States to promote and take all necessary steps to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

2. The General Assembly reaffirmed the primary responsibility of States to ensure protection of refugees and internally displaced persons and emphasized the responsibility of all States and international organizations to cooperate with those countries, particularly developing ones, affected by mass exoduses of refugees and displaced persons. It also called upon Governments, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant parts of the United Nations system, to continue to respond to assistance needs of countries hosting large numbers of refugees until durable solutions are found.

3. In the same resolution, the Assembly also noted with satisfaction the efforts by the United Nations system to develop a comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes and effects of movements of refugees and other displaced persons and the strengthening of emergency preparedness and response mechanisms. It recognized that the human rights machinery of the United Nations, in particular the mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and the human rights treaty bodies, has important capabilities to address human rights violations that cause movements of refugees and displaced persons or prevent durable solutions to their plight.

4. The complementarities between the systems for the protection of human rights and for humanitarian action, in particular the mandates of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as the work of the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict were also recognized by the Assembly. The General Assembly also highlighted that cooperation between them, within their respective mandates, as well as coordination between the human rights, political and security components of the United Nations operations, make important contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights of persons forced into mass exodus and displacement.

5. In this context, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare and submit to it at its fifty-sixth session a report on the implementation of the resolution as it pertains to all aspects of human rights and mass exoduses. The present report is submitted in response to that request.

II. Racism, ethnic conflicts and violation of human rights as the main factors generating mass exoduses

6. In the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action resulting from the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights (A/CONF.157/23), Governments recognized that gross violations of human rights, persecution, political and ethnic conflicts, famine and economic insecurity, poverty and generalized violence are among the root causes leading to the mass exoduses and displacement of people. This was reaffirmed by the Commission on Human Rights in several resolutions, and more recently, in its resolution 2000/55 of 25 April 2000, entitled "Human rights and mass exoduses". The international community has become increasingly aware of the interrelation between this wide range of factors — including human rights violations — and mass exoduses, and now considers that combating the root causes of the forcible movement of people is of critical importance and requires urgent action. In this regard, in his address to the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees highlighted the link between human rights, racism, xenophobia, intolerance and refugees, as a relationship of cause and effect and lack of respect for human rights, as the main driving force in the cycle of forced displacement.

7. In the context of the Revised Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (General Assembly resolution 49/146, annex, para. 7 (h)) and on the eve of the World

Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to be held from 31 August to 7 September 2001 in South Africa, the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolutions 2001/5 of 18 April 2001, 2000/14 of 17 April 2000 and 1999/78 of 28 April 1999, entitled "Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", called upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in her capacity as Secretary-General of the World Conference, inter alia, to assist States and regional organizations, on request, to convene national and regional meetings or to undertake other initiatives, including at the expert level, to prepare for the World Conference and to submit the recommendations of those meetings to the Preparatory Committee.

8. In this context, an Expert Seminar on Racism, Refugees and Multi-ethnic States was held in Geneva from 6 to 8 December 1999 to examine racism and ethnic conflicts as some of the root causes of the refugee crisis; to find ways and means to stop the expansion of racism and ethnic conflicts and to examine how better protection of vulnerable groups within the States concerned might be ensured. The report on the Seminar (A/CONF.189/PC.1/9, annex) was transmitted by the Secretary-General to the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference on 15 March 2000, for consideration at its first session, held in Geneva from 1 to 5 May 2000.

9. Participants in the Seminar included: five invited experts from different regions who prepared background papers; several other experts invited in their personal capacity; observers from States Members of the United Nations; representatives of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies; and representatives of intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations. The participants in the Seminar noted that nowhere were violations of human rights more dramatically illustrated than in mass exoduses, whether they occurred across borders or within States, and that the movement of refugees and forcibly displaced persons had become a tragic feature of modern times. The participants further observed that refugees and internally displaced persons often left their country or community of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution that might be based on their being targeted on account of their race, ethnicity or nationality. Racism and ethnic conflicts were identified as major causes of forced displacement and ethnic tensions were often exploited, deliberately fostered and exacerbated to further political objectives. The participants deplored the fact that these factors not only divided the population in the home country, but also refugees (or displaced persons) in the host country or within communities. It was also noted that racism and ethnic tensions complicate assistance to refugees and displaced persons throughout a crisis and, in addition, can preclude their safe return and reintegration.

10. In their final observations and suggestions, participants in the Seminar listed among others, the following measures for action to be taken by States and the United Nations to eliminate racial discrimination and ethnic violence:[1]

(a) Universal acceptance of international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law and the adoption by States of all necessary measures at the national level to ensure the implementation of their obligations under these branches of international law, including harmonization of national legislation concerning racial discrimination;

(b) Definition of a global strategy by the United Nations to address racial discrimination, the explosion of ethnic conflict and the alarming proportions of ethnic violence, and assessment of the strategy regularly with follow-up measures;

(c) Harmonization of work between the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and throughout the United Nations system, to ensure adequate protection of refugees and internally displaced persons from social and other forms of discrimination;

(d) More effective prevention by, for example, assisting States in establishing national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights;

(e) Preventive diplomacy, rapid reaction and early warning through active involvement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as of the Security Council;

(f) Increased use of the Internet as a means to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related problems;

(g) Greater monitoring of the rights and fundamental freedoms of persons belonging to groups that are particularly vulnerable to human rights abuses

and discrimination, in all phases of their displacement, return and resettlement in their place of origin;

(h) Compliance by host States of their obligation under international law to observe without any discrimination the principle of non-refoulement as enshrined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol;

(i) Consolidation of multiracial and multi-ethnic States through the promotion of human rights.

III. Action taken by the international community

11. In its resolution 54/180, the General Assembly requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the exercise of her mandate, as set out in General Assembly resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, to coordinate human rights activities throughout the United Nations system and, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the organ mandated to protect and assist refugees and returnees, persons in refugee-like situations and, in some circumstances, internally displaced persons, to pay particular attention to situations that cause or threaten to cause mass exoduses or displacements. In the same resolution, the Assembly also requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to contribute to efforts to address such situations effectively through promotion and protection measures, emergency preparedness and response mechanisms, early warning and information-sharing, technical advice, expertise and cooperation in countries of origin as well as host countries.

12. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has been developing its activities relating to the promotion and protection of the rights of internally displaced persons and returnees. The Office has assisted the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons in the implementation of his mandate, since his appointment in 1992. Although initially charged with studying the causes and consequences of internal displacement, the Representative's mandate has evolved into four main areas of work: developing a normative framework for the protection and assistance of the internally displaced; developing effective institutional responses at the international and regional levels; undertaking missions to countries affected by internal displacement and entering into solutions-oriented dialogue with the Governments concerned and other relevant actors; and carrying out research into various aspects of internal displacement.

13. The Representative plays an important role in raising awareness of the global crisis on internal displacement. The Commission has welcomed the Representative's initiative in the preparation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,[2] as well as their use within the framework of his dialogue with Governments. The Commission has also noted with appreciation that an increasing number of States, United Nations agencies, regional and non-governmental organizations are making use of the Guiding Principles. Indeed, the positive response to the Guiding Principles at all levels, nationally regionally and internationally, by Governments, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, has underlined the need for guidance in providing protection and assistance to the internally displaced.

14. Within the framework of his dialogue with Governments and all relevant actors, the Representative has undertaken 19 country visits in different regions of the world, which provided the means for assessing the extent to which the protection, assistance and development needs of the internally displaced persons were being met on the ground. Detailed information on the work of the Representative and on his country visits can be found in his reports to the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly. The Representative also shares his findings with the Secretary-General and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, whose importance in regard to following up on the recommendations emanating from the Representative's missions has been stressed by the Commission on Human Rights.

15. The human rights monitoring undertaken by the thematic and country-specific special rapporteurs, thematic working groups and the human rights treaty bodies is also important for the promotion and respect of the rights of forcibly displaced populations. As requested by the General Assembly, and the Commission on Human Rights in their resolutions on internally displaced persons, a number of special rapporteurs have paid increased attention to forcible displacement of populations and apply the Guiding

Principles to various aspects of their work (such as their reports on situations, urgent appeals, or their advocacy campaigns).

16. The human rights treaty bodies also have considerable scope for addressing the situation of displaced persons and refugees and a few have started, in specific cases, to give attention to issues of forcible displacement, which reveals a growing awareness of the importance of ensuring, when necessary, inclusion of these issues in the review of States reports and relevant recommendations.

17. During the past years, OHCHR has also been disseminating and promoting the use and application of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, including in its own field activities. In certain circumstances, OHCHR field presence enables monitoring of the rights of returnees, displaced persons and refugees and contributes to addressing the protection needs of internally displaced persons through its technical cooperation activities, which seek to create an environment in which respect for human rights will help to reintegrate displaced persons and prevent mass exoduses. They consist, for example, in supporting the strengthening of the judiciary and the creation and effective functioning of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights setting up programmes of human rights education, providing training in human rights and fostering capacity-building for local non-governmental organizations.

18. In the context of complementarities between the systems for the promotion and protection of human rights and for humanitarian action and, in particular, the mandates of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as the work of the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, coordination of their activities has been encouraged at the field and headquarters levels. This complementarity has also been acknowledged by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights in their resolutions 54/180 and 2000/55 on human rights and mass exoduses. In this respect, the High Commissioner for Refugees has addressed the Commission on Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Human Rights has been invited on a regular basis to address the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

19. Other United Nations agencies and programmes have also been involved in specific actions in this area. By definition, the mandate of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, demands that it act whenever and wherever women and children — families — are vulnerable, whether they be refugees, displaced, or affected by conflict. In this context, UNICEF has, over the past years, actively promoted the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement among its field staff and partners. UNICEF supports a collaborative inter-agency response to internal displacement as well as efforts to improve the application of the consolidated appeals process to internal displacement.

20. For the World Food Programme (WFP), food is often one of the most urgent needs of internally displaced persons and refugees. Mandated to provide food aid to the most vulnerable and food-insecure, WFP plays a major role in providing assistance in situations of mass exoduses, not only during the period of displacement, but also in support of return, resettlement, reintegration and post-conflict recovery. In such situations, the WFP strategy consists of negotiating a safe passage for humanitarian supplies with Governments and non-State actors, in order to ensure that the supplies reach its beneficiaries. WFP provides food assistance in ways that are intended to protect and promote the rights of displaced persons and refugees, with special emphasis on the most vulnerable, namely, women and children.

21. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) often plays a critical role in the resettlement phase of internally displaced persons and refugees. Aware of the fact that displaced populations attract less humanitarian support once they return to their community of origin, UNDP supports the development of the communities that the displaced have rejoined, implements rehabilitation activities in the displaced communities of return in order to facilitate their sustainable reintegration, and provides local capacity-building support to local entities to enable then to take an active role in the reintegration and resettlement process.

IV. Efforts by the United Nations and other institutions to enhance preventive capacities

22. In the context of mass displacement, internal displacement and cross-border movements often have the same causes. Thus, addressing situations of internal displacement can contribute to mitigating the causes of mass exoduses. Systematic and specific monitoring of internal displacement worldwide thus facilitates the United Nations system's preventive activities and supports contingency planning efforts to address both phenomena.

23. Timely and reliable information has become an essential element for efficient and coordinated humanitarian responses, for example, in cases of mass exoduses. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has, for example, set up an information structure based on the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) and ReliefWeb, whose complementary services aim at improving the response capacity of the global humanitarian community. Together, the Network and ReliefWeb represent a tightly interlinked and publicly accessible information system that provides strong support to humanitarian decision makers worldwide.

24. Established in 1995, IRIN currently provides a snapshot of events as they unfold in 46 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and 8 countries in Central Asia. In dealing with new crises, the Network's reports aim to provide early warning and improve insight into the political, economic and humanitarian dynamics of the concerned regions. The Network's news always includes information relating to movements of refugees and displaced persons and it advocates for humanitarian principles, especially in countries largely ignored by the media. Over the past two years, IRIN has expanded its information networks to Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe. IRIN reports are available via its web site, as well as email, which now reflect 8,000 subscribers, or a readership of over 40,000 for the Africa service alone.

25. ReliefWeb, with users in 170 countries, is acknowledged as the premier online source of information on natural disasters and complex emergencies. It provides updated information on unfolding emergencies and natural disasters aiming at supporting decision-making by users on relief, logistics, funding and contingency planning, especially in disaster and emergency-prone countries. As part of its most recent activities, ReliefWeb launched the email-via-email service to allow users to subscribe to critical humanitarian information even in remote field locations and received the support of the humanitarian community to establish a satellite office in Asia. ReliefWeb has also strengthened its partnerships with field offices of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and provides web site development services and Internet hosting for field-based information.

26. Another example is the project, entitled "Global Internally Displaced Persons Database", which is posted on the Web and contains valuable information on internal displacement. The database project was created in late 1998 at the initiative of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group, described below, and the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator and has been long advocated by the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons. The project is under the overall supervision of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which oversees and evaluates the development of the project as a whole, on behalf of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. This task was entrusted to the Norwegian Refugee Council/Global IDP Project, which is responsible for the design, creation and day-to-day management of the database, including organizing the collection, review and display of information, identifying information gaps and alternative sources of information and ensuring regular updates of information.

27. The objectives of the database are to offer central access to information related to internally displaced persons to any organization, institution or individual dealing with assistance to and protection of internally displaced people, and to become a major non-governmental organization focal point for advocacy and information on the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons. It aims at assisting humanitarian organizations in field operations by complementing existing information networks on internally displaced persons and contributing to the harmonization of information management practices on internal displacement among humanitarian agencies, by promoting common standards for data collection,

common definition of indicators and standard methodology.

28. The database also aims to support the mandates of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, through the provision of up-to-date accurate information on internal displacement, in a standardized and organized format that will allow cross-country comparison. Finally, the database aims to assist in measuring the impact of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement by using them in the monitoring of situations of worldwide internal displacement.

V. Coordination between United Nations agencies and other actors to improve emergency response

29. In order to address complex emergencies in a more effective manner, it is necessary to promote a comprehensive approach, while at the same time ensuring a coherent and integrated response from the different entities of the United Nations and other actors. The scope and complexity of mass exoduses therefore call for a multifaceted response and the active involvement of organizations both within and outside the United Nations system.

30. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General on human rights and mass exoduses to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session (A/54/360), the United Nations has, over the past few years, taken several important steps to develop policies and create new bodies in order to provide a more comprehensive response to the protection and assistance needs of displaced populations. In the present reporting period, some steps have been taken, in particular, to enhance the international response to internal displacement.

31. At the Headquarters level, the humanitarian structure responsible for the protection of and assistance to internally displaced populations comprises the Emergency Relief Coordinator, who heads the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Office serves as the secretariat of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.[3] At the field level, in situations of internal displacement, defined as complex emergencies, a humanitarian coordinator or resident coordinator is normally designated by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, as the official who is responsible and accountable for ensuring that humanitarian needs are met before, during and after an emergency.

32. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has sought to pay increased attention to the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons. In recognition of the fact that protection often lacks the attention it requires in inter-agency responses to internal displacement, in December 1999, the Committee adopted a policy paper on protection of internally displaced persons which was complemented in April 2000 by "Supplementary Guidance to Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators" and which clearly defines the responsibilities in the field in relation to internally displaced populations. Effective policy implementation is essential and will need to be closely monitored.

33. In order to provide additional support to these efforts, a Senior Inter-Agency Network consisting of senior focal points from all concerned organizations, was set up within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Led by a Special Coordinator of the Network on Internal Displacement, the main objective of the Network has been to assess current efforts being undertaken to provide protection and assistance to internally displaced populations and to identify and address areas where the current response may not be adequate, including through country assessment missions, namely, to Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Indonesia.

34. In April 2001, the Senior Inter-Agency Network submitted to the Special Coordinator of the Network on Internal Displacement its recommendations, which included some important reform measures to respond, at the field and Headquarters levels, to the needs of internally displaced persons. The recommendations were endorsed in May 2001 by the Secretary-General.

35. The recommendations include the proposals that at the field level, the humanitarian coordinator have overall responsibility for strategic coordination in consultation with the United Nations country team and that he or she be supported by a focal point; and that the humanitarian coordinator, in consultation with the Emergency Relief Coordinator, may also request one of the operational agencies to assume primary responsibility.

36. At the Headquarters level, the Network's recommendations have led to the creation of a small, non-operational office for internally displaced persons coordination to be established within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The office will advise and support the Emergency Relief Coordinator in focusing on and coordinating an effective response to the needs of the internally displaced. It will also provide a nucleus of expertise on internally displaced persons, which will act as a catalyst in guiding the response to internally displaced persons crises by supporting the field activities of the members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

37. The main activities of the office for internally displaced persons coordination will consist of monitoring situations of internal displacement globally; undertaking systematic reviews of selected countries and proposing revised approaches and collaborative arrangements to assess combined efforts to meet the assistance and protection needs of internally displaced persons. The office will also be responsible for training and providing expert guidance to other humanitarian agencies on issues related to internally displaced persons issues. It will advocate for resource mobilization within the processes of the inter-agency consolidated appeals process, as well as emergency appeals. The office is to be led by a senior official and be composed of a few staff members seconded from key United Nations agencies. It will report to the Emergency Relief Coordinator and periodically to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in view of its inter-agency basis.

38. While recalling that responsibility for the assistance and protection of internally displaced persons rests primarily with the national authorities, the Network stresses the importance to address more actively the underlying causes of displacement.

39. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group has also established a Reference Group on Humanitarian Action and Human Rights, the objective of which is to develop strategies and initiatives to enhance the integration of human rights into humanitarian action. The group, which meets on a bi-monthly basis and operates under the overall guidance of the Committee, constitutes a useful forum for information-sharing and doctrine development relating to these issues.

40. As part of its recent activities, the Reference Group completed a compendium of field practices on the promotion and protection of human rights through humanitarian action, entitled "Growing the Sheltering Tree". The compendium is intended to serve as a major contribution towards assisting humanitarian field workers in undertaking human rights-related activities. The Group has also promoted the integration of human rights issues and concerns in the consolidated appeals process, and is working on promoting human rights training for humanitarian workers.

41. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights participates in the meetings and work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Senior Inter-Agency Network, with a view to ensuring that due attention is paid to human rights issues in responding to the assistance needs of countries hosting large numbers of refugees and displaced persons.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

42. The United Nations has taken a number of steps to enhance its capacity to avert new mass exoduses and to tackle the root causes of such outflows. On the eve of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, greater awareness of the link between racism, ethnic conflicts, violation of human rights as the causes of mass exoduses have led to a better response by the international community when such humanitarian crises arise.

43. Progress has been also made towards more effective coordination of United Nations activities pertaining to human rights and mass exoduses with, *inter alia*, the development of normative and other guidance on the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons, the creation of the Senior Inter-Agency Network to review international responses to internal displacement and the establishment in due course of an inter-agency office for internally displaced persons coordination within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

44. However, progress still remains to be made in this respect. Human rights and humanitarian components of United Nations operations must continue to cooperate within this new structure in order to ensure that human rights violations as cause and consequence of mass

exoduses are addressed and the protection of refugees and displaced persons is enhanced. In the meantime, many of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his previous report to the General Assembly on human rights and mass exoduses remain relevant:

(a) Promoting accession to international law instruments, including humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, and developing subsequent national legislation;

(b) Disseminating and advocating human rights and humanitarian principles to encourage compliance with prohibitions against arbitrary and forcible displacement and greater respect for the rights of those who flee;

(c) Establishing mechanisms to ensure compliance with international law in order to end the culture of impunity which currently prevails: in this respect, Member States are encouraged to ratify the Statute of the International Criminal Court;

(d) Sharing responsibility with States which experience the greatest political, economic and social impact of mass exoduses to encourage and support their respect for human rights and humanitarian principles in their treatment of refugees and displaced persons;

(e) Improving security and access to humanitarian assistance and creating a secure environment for civilians endangered by conflict and for the delivery of aid;

(f) Encouraging Member States to ratify the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel;

(g) Ensuring that the Security Council is regularly informed of human rights and humanitarian situations in cases of potential or actual conflict.

45. Closer cooperation at the Headquarters and field levels is now taking place between the Offices of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for example, through mutual participation in the meetings of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Commission on Human Rights, and more systematic coordination of each agency's activities in the field.

Notes

[1] It was agreed that the Seminar should not formally adopt recommendations but, rather, list those observations and suggestions made by experts and participants which appeared to have broad support, it being understood that there was not necessarily full consensus on each of them.

[2] E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex.

[3] The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group consists of: the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization. In addition, there is a standing invitation to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Organization for Migration, the Representative of the Secretary-General for internally displaced persons and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Three non-governmental consortia, namely, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, Inter-action and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, are also invited to attend on a permanent basis.